

HEARING OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

B e f o r e:

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JOHN P. GIBBONS, JR., ESQ.
Village Attorney

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PATRICIA A. TAUBER, RPR
Official Court Reporter

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1 MR. SCALERO: Ladies and gentlemen, please
2 silence all pagers and cell phones. In the event of an
3 emergency there are exits located in the rear of the
4 room.

5 MAYOR STRAUSS: Good evening, ladies and
6 gentlemen. Thank you for coming out this evening. This
7 is a continuation from the hearing of November 14th
8 regarding 86 Main Street. There were many questions last
9 week -- comments from the last hearing, I should say --
10 that I believe have been addressed.

11 Mr. Silva?

12 MR. SILVA: Yes.

13 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, members of
14 the Board, Mr. Gibbons.

15 My name is Marco Silva. With me tonight I have
16 here Joe Puccio, the developer, as well as Willy
17 Zambrano, the architect.

18 This is a continuation of the previous meeting.
19 I don't believe that there were any outstanding
20 questions. Although, there were some suggestions that
21 were made. Those have been addressed.

22 So, based on the feedback, we pushed back the
23 top partial floor by an additional ten feet. It's now
24 fully 20 feet from the front. That also resulted in the
25 loss of one apartment. We are now at ten apartments,

1 rather than 11, just because of the configuration of the
2 way the elevator shafts are. You'll see them on the
3 plans back here. It would have created a very odd,
4 shallow apartment. So instead, that is about a 500-or-so
5 square foot rec room for the tenants.

6 Previous to that, based also on feedback, we
7 had removed a rooftop pavilion, removed an elevator
8 access to the roof, things like that.

9 So I think we've addressed all the concerns
10 that have been brought up to us. We've also brought --
11 we discussed last time design and brick samples. I
12 didn't want to put this up because it's a little heavy,
13 but it's here. So it has no mortar, but you get an idea
14 of the types of material that are going to be part of
15 this, and the renderings as well.

16 One other thing I wanted to point out is: We
17 had assumed at the last meeting that -- because right now
18 it's this what I refer to as a toothless gap -- we
19 thought that the two buildings on either side of us, 90
20 and 84, were the same height. They are not. So we are
21 lining up with one of those buildings and the other one
22 is not lined up. Just the reality of it. We are lining
23 up with one of those buildings. You can't line up with
24 both. We tried to measure 84, and it turns out there is
25 no roof access to 84.

1 Another thing I wanted to point out is: I had
2 mentioned the last time, because of the other projects
3 that are going on -- I know there's going to be some
4 sewer work being done. Then we're going to have a
5 parking garage basically being put up behind our
6 building. We have the railroad closing off the street at
7 the end. We have the ongoing project across the street
8 from us as well. We had offered that, if the Board finds
9 it acceptable, and if this is approved, that we could
10 offset our work with those in order not to have them
11 overlap, if it's convenient. Otherwise, obviously the
12 applicant would much prefer to just start immediately, if
13 approved, but that was just an offer.

14 One other thing that I wanted to mention:
15 Since our last meeting in November, on December 18th of
16 2018 the Nassau County Comptroller's Office, their Policy
17 and Research Unit, put out a report entitled This is
18 Nassau, Key Population Trends. If anybody wants to take
19 a look at it, it's on the assessor's web site. I'm not
20 going to read it to you. I'll give you just a couple of
21 quotes from two pages, page two and six, and their
22 conclusion. And I just thought it was interesting
23 because they came up with some of the same things that we
24 had mentioned here.

25 In the preface they acknowledge that our large

1 baby boomer population is aging and many are seeking to
2 downsize into more affordable and easier to maintain
3 housing. They also remind us that it's no secret that
4 Nassau County is struggling to attract young
5 professionals, which is detrimental to our communities,
6 government, and economy, as millennials move to regions
7 with more affordable housing and public transit options.

8 On page two they reference that if Nassau
9 County is not able to attract young families it would
10 negatively impact the economic viability of the region.
11 And they reference the fact that Nassau County's
12 population in the 35 to 44 age group since 2000 has
13 decreased by an astonishing -- their words -- 26 percent.

14 They then recommend that Nassau County
15 policy-makers will need to find innovative solutions to
16 expand the affordable housing options, walkable
17 downtowns, and public transportation, to remain
18 competitive. Luckily we have all those things.

19 Their conclusion, or at least a piece of their
20 conclusion, is that Nassau will have to focus on making
21 its neighborhoods attractive to young professionals
22 seeking affordable housing options in centrally located
23 developments. Without affordable transit-oriented
24 housing units, the county will remain unattractive to a
25 young talented workforce and will bear the burden of that

1 loss.

2 So we are ahead of the game. Nassau County is
3 only now catching up to what we started in the Master
4 Plan years ago.

5 Now if you have any questions regarding the
6 changes in design, or directed for the architect, I would
7 offer --

8 MAYOR STRAUSS: Mr. Silva, did you mention
9 about changing of the size of the rooms?

10 MR. SILVA: Yes. The size of the rooms,
11 they're all between -- the two -- the largest and
12 smallest now happen to be on the top floor. About five
13 -- I'm saying here from memory. I'll check.

14 MAYOR STRAUSS: The majority of the rooms have
15 been increased to 600-and-something square feet.

16 MR. SILVA: Right. They're all slightly
17 larger, and the two extremes are about 540 and 7 --

18 MR. ZAMBRANO: No. They're --

19 MAYOR STRAUSS: Sir, if you could approach the
20 podium and state your name for the record. Thank you.

21 MR. ZAMBRANO: Good evening, members of the
22 Board. My name is Willie Zambrano. I'm the architect
23 for the project.

24 So we have one of the smallest apartments on
25 each floor is 663 square feet and the biggest one is 739.

1 MAYOR STRAUSS: All right. Which is larger
2 than what was previously presented to us back in
3 November.

4 MR. ZAMBRANO: Right.

5 MAYOR STRAUSS: Some of the residents had asked
6 if we could possibly get those increased, and that was
7 done.

8 MR. ZAMBRANO: That's right.

9 MAYOR STRAUSS: OK. Deputy Mayor?

10 MR. PEREIRA: Mayor, I think that all of my
11 concerns have been addressed. And I thank Mr. Silva,
12 Mr. Zambrano and Mr. Puccio, for doing their due
13 diligence. Really, I'm glad that -- I'm sure Mr. Puccio
14 is not glad, but we went down one, from 11 to ten, they
15 got bigger, and I think that that alleviates some of the
16 concerns.

17 And I also noticed, did we do something to the
18 top there to make like a -- that detail on top was not
19 there last time; is that correct?

20 MR. SILVA: Correct.

21 MR. ZAMBRANO: So at the last public hearing
22 the concern was that we wanted to actually bring back
23 some historical content in the form of a cornice. So we
24 opted to actually, since we're doing the facade, we
25 articulated a dental-type of cornice that actually

1 emulates the historical content along the street.

2 MR. PEREIRA: That's great.

3 MR. ZAMBRANO: So, along with the motifs that
4 we have to the right and to the left, we created some
5 articulated little motifs as well. So this way it really
6 relates to the streetscape then. It allows us, as a new
7 building, to be a good neighbor.

8 MR. PEREIRA: I have no questions. Thank you.

9 MAYOR STRAUSS: Trustee Cusato?

10 MR. CUSATO: Thank you, Mayor.

11 Mr. Silva, so it's obvious by these drawings
12 that you listened to us, our remarks, our suggestions.
13 And you know what, you turned me around. I love the way
14 this building looks, and maybe down the road this may be
15 the future of Main Street. Maybe this building could be
16 the standard of the buildings. I know we have some
17 parking issues, but why not. We have an empty lot. We
18 have a vacant building. Why not develop it and make Main
19 Street a vibrant area.

20 MR. SILVA: I appreciate that.

21 MR. CUSATO: I do have one question.

22 MR. SILVA: Yes.

23 MR. CUSATO: Page 5, apartment 3 shows a
24 kitchen area which was never detailed before. So is
25 every kitchen going to be the same size, or will the

1 kitchens be based on the area of each?

2 Just an observation. It's not going to sway
3 me.

4 MR. ZAMBRANO: The only reason why we did that
5 one apartment was because that's the smallest apartment.
6 We wanted to make sure that we can fit everything that we
7 can in that space, and it does fit. Obviously, with the
8 739 square feet, we were able to actually increase the
9 kitchen sizes, increase the bedroom sizes, increase the
10 living spaces.

11 MR. CUSATO: Based on the square footage alone?

12 MR. ZAMBRANO: Exactly. Yes.

13 MR. CUSATO: All right. Thank you.

14 MAYOR STRAUSS: Trustee Durham?

15 MR. DURHAM: Thank you.

16 And I am very much appreciative of the fact
17 that you guys listened to us, came back with a building
18 that took into consideration the changes that we were
19 looking for, the design, the front, the top. Definitely
20 much better than what it was.

21 The brick face, is it actual brick or is it
22 stucco? It's going to be physical bricks --

23 MR. SILVA: Yes. They refer to it as a veneer.
24 It's real brick, but just not a full-size brick. They
25 cut it down to a smaller size, but it's real brick.

1 MR. DURHAM: It's real brick. OK.

2 And with moving back you can't see the top
3 floor, which is one of the things that we wanted. And
4 I'm glad you came back with the designs and you were able
5 to accomplish this. And I think it's going to be a good
6 project.

7 MR. SILVA: Thank you very much.

8 MAYOR STRAUSS: Trustee Walsh?

9 MR. WALSH: Yes. Thank you.

10 Hello, Mr. Silva. How are you? Thank you for
11 coming down.

12 For me, I mean, what I asked for at the
13 hearing, you accomplished. I asked you to make the rooms
14 larger, and you did, and now they're in line with the
15 size of the apartment buildings on Main Street further
16 down. The Harrison House, which has been there a long
17 time, they're approximately 750 square feet. So these
18 units are in line with that.

19 I understand the need for the two smaller
20 units. You have to cut out for the refuse rooms, so I
21 see that. You know, the two units are similar and one is
22 cut out for the refuse. You have to have a refuse room.
23 You have to get rid of garbage. And I understand why
24 it's a little bit smaller. I have no problem with that
25 at all.

1 I like the difference in the top of the
2 building, and I like the difference around the windows.
3 The owner had pointed out the brick veneer, if you want
4 to call it brick veneer, which has like a -- when I
5 looked at the original pictures I thought it was like
6 granite. It has an appearance of being shiny like
7 granite. It's nice brick. I think this is a very nice
8 building. I like the square -- you highlighted the
9 squares that were not highlighted the last time, which
10 gives an older appearance.

11 Everything that I pointed out and asked for,
12 you did. You've maintained the line. It's a little bit
13 higher. You said you couldn't get to the roof, but the
14 Building Department the day before had told me that that
15 is 31 feet 3 inches. I don't know how they know that,
16 but . . . So this is a few feet higher, but it's in line
17 with the building next to it.

18 MR. SILVA: Correct.

19 MR. WALSH: I like it all.

20 I'm wondering if this brick veneer, is it going
21 to be adhered to a block building? Is that what it's
22 going to be?

23 That would be one of my questions: What is
24 behind that veneer?

25 MR. ZAMBRANO: In terms of construction, the

1 backing can be a metal stud with some type of reinforcing
2 right in front of the brick face.

3 We don't normally actually do load-bearing
4 conditions out of brick. We actually support them on
5 every level. So as a veneer, it will be like a skin.
6 Behind it will be insulation. And behind that will be
7 that metal stud that will support the brick from falling
8 off.

9 MR. WALSH: Good. Thank you. I just wanted to
10 know how it was going to be.

11 People have to remember that the alternative to
12 this, as of right, could be a square brick or a square
13 any kind of exterior facade office building, and would an
14 office building in the area be better? Would it be
15 doctor's offices, because we're in the proximity of
16 Winthrop Hospital, that bring patients and employees and
17 doctors. And what goes along with doctor's offices is
18 probably a never-ending group of salespeople and people
19 that pick up laboratory pickups and stuff. So I believe
20 that an office building that would cater to either
21 lawyers, or doctors, or something like that, would bring
22 a much larger, you know, much more people and traffic to
23 the area during the day, but at night you won't have the
24 people that live there that can thrive in the area.
25 You'll have what we've had for many, many, years, which

1 is busy during the day Monday to Friday, and then on the
2 weekends and at night vacant. I don't want to see that,
3 and that's why I'm happy with this building. I just
4 think that this is a good land use, and I have nothing
5 else to say.

6 Thank you, Mayor.

7 MAYOR STRAUSS: All right. Thank you.

8 Any other comments from the Board?

9 MR. DURHAM: I have.

10 MAYOR STRAUSS: Yes, Mr. Durham.

11 MR. DURHAM: Utilities coming into the
12 building. Right now I see that the utilities are coming
13 into the building off of Main Street. They run along the
14 side of the building and then go to a pole in the back,
15 and that supplies power to the building next to it.

16 How are you guys going to address the utilities
17 for that?

18 MR. SILVA: I don't know, but presumably we'll
19 contact the LIPA, I guess it is, and they'll provide
20 whatever is necessary. It's beyond my area of expertise.
21 I'm not sure if the architect is aware, but --

22 MR. DURHAM: Because right now it's bolted to
23 the side of your building going back, and then it goes to
24 a telephone pole in the back, and off of that telephone
25 pole in the back it powers the building next to it.

1 MR. SILVA: The one next to us.

2 MR. DURHAM: On the other side.

3 MR. SILVA: Well everything will be done
4 according to code and whatever applicable regulations, be
5 they state or otherwise. So everything will be done
6 properly. And of course we'll have Mr. Whelan's input
7 throughout the process as well. And we'd be more than
8 willing to comply with whatever directives we receive in
9 that regard.

10 MR. DURHAM: So that could either be in the
11 ground or bring the utility into the back.

12 MR. SILVA: I'm not sure how that would work.

13 MAYOR STRAUSS: Any other comments from the
14 Board?

15 MR. WALSH: Just one comment, if you don't
16 mind, Mayor.

17 In the beginning of your presentation today you
18 said that the applicant is willing to start this as soon
19 as possible; is that correct?

20 MR. SILVA: Yes.

21 MR. WALSH: That would be terrific for me. I'd
22 rather see construction while everything is going on,
23 construction start now instead of, like the Cross Bronx
24 Expressway, have things drag out for 20 years.

25 MR. SILVA: Right.

1 MR. WALSH: So while things are going on down
2 there, this is a good time to start --

3 MR. SILVA: Yes. It was presented as an
4 option. Sorry to talk over. It was presented as an
5 option in case it made more sense to not have everything
6 overlap.

7 And just one thing, because I know some people
8 weren't here for the last meeting, maybe somebody
9 watching at home: I don't want to go over the entire
10 first presentation, but we're talking about the impact of
11 a commercial business there. And the TOD development,
12 based on that Rutgers study, we know that it's .03 -- or
13 .02 in New Jersey -- in terms of how many students per
14 unit come from here. And that's why we have purposely
15 smaller size units that attract younger families without
16 kids, probably no cars, and all that. So we're doing
17 that on purpose. Whereas, if we had done something as a
18 commercial building, clearly you're going to have
19 customers non-stop coming through there. And that's why
20 we did this development the way it is.

21 MAYOR STRAUSS: Thank you.

22 Anything else, Mr. Silva?

23 MR. SILVA: I believe that's it.

24 MAYOR STRAUSS: OK. If you have a seat, we're
25 going to open up to public comment.

1 MR. SILVA: Thank you.

2 MAYOR STRAUSS: I ask anybody approaching the
3 podium to please speak slowly, clearly, for the reporter,
4 and state your name and your address for the record.

5 Anybody in the first row? Second row?

6 MR. FOX: Good evening, everybody.

7 MAYOR STRAUSS: Good evening.

8 MR. FOX: Mayor Strauss, Board. I appreciate
9 this --

10 MAYOR STRAUSS: Please state your name and your
11 address.

12 MR. FOX: Oh. Bob Fox, from 79 Main Street,
13 Fox's.

14 I do appreciate this second chance to voice my
15 opinion and in some small way weigh in on what goes on
16 down here.

17 You know, once these projects are completed we
18 can't go back. They may stand for a couple of hundred
19 years or more. So I appreciate all the care that you
20 guys are taking before these variances are granted and
21 the Village goes ahead.

22 I'd like to make it clear that we're certainly
23 in favor of a new, revitalized downtown Mineola. I mean,
24 everybody benefits in that. But this long-term vision
25 has to be implemented in a way that doesn't sacrifice the

1 short-term. A business cannot hold its breath.. It has
2 to function day-to-day in the short-term.

3 We can't promise our customers a place to park
4 next year when everything is finished. They just don't
5 come back. So the process itself, the development
6 process itself, is what I think I need to speak about
7 tonight. It's very important to us. How we stage and
8 strategize this development process is vital to Fox's.

9 As Mr. Silva stated, Main Street and 2nd Street
10 are experiencing tremendous change now, during this
11 construction phase, and then again when the Village Green
12 and the apartments open up. We'll keep trying to adapt
13 to this change, but it takes time.

14 We anticipate additional congestion and parking
15 issues ahead, once the Village Green opens up, and we'll
16 have to adjust to that. And then -- again as Mr. Silva
17 stated -- the third rail project is going to come through
18 and add a whole 'nother element of challenges.

19 First it's going to cut off -- first Main
20 Street will close at the tracks. So it's going to cut
21 off all access to the south, and from all the parking on
22 the south side of the tracks that we currently enjoy,
23 especially on the weekends. 2nd Street will be our only
24 access for our customers to get to our store. And some
25 of our current parking is going to be taken by the turn

1 around that the MTA is going to take from us.

2 So I guess our first concern with the project
3 is the timing, the timing of the project. With all
4 that's going on, do we really need to overstress the
5 situation now and throw this development right into the
6 middle of Main Street?

7 You know, since this started, the Village Green
8 project, we acquired the parking passes and have all our
9 associates park in the municipal lot. And this is fine.
10 It works. But for some reason we find the tenants of the
11 apartments don't use the municipal lots. They want to
12 park overnight in our lots and then, during the day, on
13 the street. And for now we try to accommodate them, but
14 there are all those issues. And for instance, snow
15 plowing will be one of them that come up very shortly
16 when those cars are still around. Sometimes in
17 frustration I wonder: Why are we making the effort to
18 move all our associates to municipal lots if the tenants
19 are just going to fill in on the street around the spaces
20 that we've emptied?

21 Unfortunately Joe's development offers no
22 solution for parking and will impact the immediate number
23 of spaces around us, even with everything that's going on
24 that's going to impact the spaces around us.

25 Saturday is our busiest day, and then these

1 tenants will be consuming valuable spots that we would
2 otherwise like to see turn over eight to ten times during
3 the day. There are currently only 21 spaces on Main
4 Street, on both sides of Main Street on our block. This
5 is what we're talking about. This is what we have to
6 work with. As a matter of fact, the Mayor and the county
7 granted us permission to have a curb cut. But we chose
8 to take the accessway through 2nd Street, even though we
9 have to lease that access at \$650 a month, just to save
10 two spaces. That's how valuable these spaces are to us.

11 And I'd like to make a quick point here, if I
12 may. We're grateful for the two hour meter parking, but
13 it would be better to have a two hour limit parking. The
14 two hour limit would disrupt the squatters that take the
15 space all day and feed the meter, especially the
16 employees along 2nd Street who choke their own businesses
17 with their staff parking. Mark the tires. Come up with
18 a way for two hour limit, and that would at least keep
19 Main Street flowing.

20 You know, when the Buccelli Uomo building was
21 purchased it was bought with these parking and other
22 limitations that the downtown has imposed over the years,
23 and the price reflected, you know, these zoning
24 requirements and limitations for the potential scale of
25 this purchase.

1 Now of course we're talking about ten
2 apartments plus retail in a small space. That's tipping
3 the scale a lot on Main Street. I hear the size of the
4 apartments are getting bigger, and I was grateful for
5 that because we want to attract the type of residences
6 that are going to support Main Street, and hopefully the
7 apartments will be luxurious enough to do that.

8 All the apartments that have been approved so
9 far have approved the necessary provision for parking.
10 That's why we originally did not object to Kevin
11 Lalezarian's Village Green development, because they have
12 a plan for parking. Even their recently built
13 apartments -- I think I'm speaking of 147 Main Street,
14 maybe Harrison -- the apartments are built over the
15 parking. It's a well-designed structure that seems to
16 work.

17 So maybe the only thing that makes sense, if
18 any further development is proposed, is MTA parking
19 structure behind the store, behind all of Main Street.
20 But we have to tie it altogether.

21 It was originally introduced to me that the
22 Village was going to wait on this development until the
23 MTA structure was completed, not just promised or under
24 construction but completed.

25 When I first met Joe Puccio he asked us to

1 lease the space. He explained to me that he would
2 probably not be able to build until the parking structure
3 was completed. And he was OK to that. And he reiterated
4 that point, and I appreciate that, today. And he was
5 looking to lease the space, as expected, to cover his
6 carrying costs until that time, and we're currently
7 working on towards this now.

8 To us the advantage of this delay would be a
9 reason to work with Joe and to do everything we can to
10 cover his carrying costs. And at that first meeting I
11 immediately admired Joe for his understanding. I was
12 impressed that he was sympathetic to the parking
13 situation in our community, and not just the developer
14 looking to take advantage of the community and the train
15 stop.

16 For us it's vital that we stage these projects
17 in succession, that we get through one phase before we
18 jump into the other, that this parking structure opens up
19 the street before we create all kinds of congestion. For
20 the food people, yes, they can work with pedestrian
21 traffic. People eat three times a day. Ladies don't
22 shop like that. Some shop quite frequently, but not
23 three times a day. We need to have people come in from
24 all of Nassau County. We need cars. We don't need
25 congestion. We need parking.

1 What I'm asking for tonight is that you please
2 stage these developments. Hold back on this development
3 until the parking garage is completed. That would give
4 us the chance to somehow make it through this development
5 process so that Fox's of Mineola can remain and be part
6 of the new revitalized downtown Mineola.

7 Thank you.

8 MAYOR STRAUSS: Thank you.

9 Mr. Fox, you mentioned about short-term versus
10 long-term. Wouldn't it be better if we get rid of all of
11 these projects quicker than dragging them out over years
12 and years and years, to your point exactly about the
13 parking --

14 MR. FOX: Mayor Strauss, it's not --

15 MAYOR STRAUSS: -- to the community?

16 MR. FOX: It's not the development. It's not
17 the development, the construction, that's going to
18 cripple us. We've been working with that, and dust
19 falling, and trucks on the street. It's not the
20 development that's going to cripple us. What we need,
21 and Joe is not providing, is the additional parking.
22 That has to come first. And that's going to come with
23 the structure behind us. Without it we're done. We're
24 done. We can't put another 11, 15 cars in this area and
25 still survive. We can't. I'm telling you, Fox's can't.

1 It's congestion. And when they cut off Main Street,
2 we're only talking about these 21 spaces. Our little lot
3 which is -- forget about it. And then the lot behind us,
4 which is really the commuters.

5 And at the last minute you made the point, and
6 a good point, that maybe we should prohibit these
7 residences from having the right to take commuter spaces,
8 and I agree with you. But then, is it any better than
9 taking Main Street parking spaces, shopping spaces?

10 It's not the fact that we're going to get rid
11 of the dust, or the cement trucks, or the ground digging.
12 It's going to be the fact that the stages will allow us
13 to open up more parking before we create congestion
14 because there is no parking. And Joe understood that.
15 And we're willing to work together on that. If he gets
16 permission to develop this project at a later date, he
17 will hold onto that idea and allow things to take place
18 in stages. And he understood that from the start, and I
19 hope everybody does.

20 We've been there for 35 years. I don't know
21 why we're going to be the ones that get pushed out,
22 because it will happen. We can't absorb any more cars.
23 It's not the development. It's the cars. The residents
24 have cars. George is just telling me today, they're
25 always around. It's ten more units, possibly 15 more

1 cars. Where are we going to put 15 more cars in that
2 area?

3 MAYOR STRAUSS: Maybe it's five more cars.

4 MR. FOX: How do you get from Main Street to
5 Roosevelt Field, to Long Beach, to anywhere on Long
6 Island?

7 The bus is no good here.

8 MR. PEREIRA: Four letters, U-B-E-R.

9 MR. FOX: I appreciate that, but it's -- but
10 the reality is the studies showed on Kevin Lalezarian's
11 project that every unit takes 1.3 cars. I read that the
12 other day on Kevin Lalezarians's project. That's the
13 current rate of cars per unit. That's the reality.

14 I'm willing to get behind everything here, but
15 we've got to do it in stages. You can't have these cars
16 on the street until that parking structure. Maybe it
17 will happen faster. But we have to have it not just
18 promised but built, because that's going to relieve
19 everything and give us a chance to hang on.

20 That's what I'm hear to say. We've got to have
21 that parking structure done. Let this go -- what is the
22 rush? What's the rush? If it's coming, it's coming.
23 Why can't we just let things happen in the natural flow
24 so we, who have been there for 35 years, can still be
25 part of the fabric of the community?

1 We've proven that Main Street can work. It's
2 been a great home for us for 35 years. We're centrally
3 located in the heart of Nassau County. Main Street can
4 work, but why drive away Fox's to bring on an apartment
5 house? What good is that going to do Main Street?

6 Yeah, we can go out to the old Toys "R" Us and
7 lease another space down the street, but we're proud of
8 being Fox's of Mineola. It's worked here. Why it's
9 worked, I don't know. But it's worked here.

10 Why . . . these things take time. Look at
11 Kevin's project. It takes time. And yeah, it's caused
12 setbacks, but we're willing to work through it. And I
13 appreciate the fact that Joe and Mr. Silva, they said:
14 We're willing to wait. That's really honorable. I think
15 -- I really do think they're sympathetic to the
16 situation. Every spot matters. We can't absorb another
17 ten cuts.

18 MR. CUSATO: Sir, excuse me. Don't you have a
19 parking lot?

20 MR. FOX: That parking lot is a partial remedy
21 for our customers.

22 MR. CUSATO: So that's like, what, 30 spots
23 maybe?

24 MR. FOX: We need more than that to operate.

25 MR. CUSATO: No. Right now, how many?

1 MR. FOX: About 30 spots.

2 MR. CUSATO: 30 spots. So you do have a
3 parking lot across the street from the main store.

4 MR. FOX: Yes.

5 MR. CUSATO: And that's only for your people.

6 MR. FOX: Yes.

7 MR. CUSATO: OK.

8 MR. FOX: Well, we share it with everybody,
9 but . . .

10 MR. CUSATO: Even though the sign says: Fox's
11 Only.

12 MR. FOX: Yes.

13 MR. CUSATO: OK. Thank you.

14 MR. FOX: But it's not enough. We rely on the
15 street parking. We rely on the parking on the south of
16 the tracks. To run a retail business you need parking,
17 and it can't just be a guy out there saying: OK, there's
18 one space here. Wait in line. Wait in line. These
19 ladies will not wait in line for a space to open up.
20 They come. They park.

21 MR. CUSATO: So if they want to buy a dress,
22 they won't wait, they'll go someplace else? If they
23 really want that dress, they'll go someplace else?

24 MR. FOX: Absolutely they will go someplace
25 else. And absolutely, if they feel like this when

1 they're trying to park, and they get anxiety, they're
2 just going to go someplace else anyway. And when you
3 think about Fox's, they're going to think: Oh, forget
4 about the parking. I'm not going back.

5 MAYOR STRAUSS: So it sounds like you're pretty
6 successful with the parking that you have and it's making
7 you successful.

8 MR. FOX: It's worked.

9 MAYOR STRAUSS: OK.

10 MR. FOX: But --

11 MAYOR STRAUSS: Folks, please be quiet in the
12 audience so the court reporter can hear what she needs to
13 record.

14 (Off the record discussion ensued between
15 Mr. Fox and his wife.)

16 MR. FOX: It has worked. It is working. But
17 it's getting tighter and tighter and tighter.

18 Now, the Village Green has three levels of
19 parking underneath. I'm thrilled about that. But when
20 visitors come to park to visit somebody, or when they
21 come for the retail, or maybe the hairdressers or
22 restaurants, they may not go underground. They may not
23 know that the entrance is around on Station Plaza, that
24 they have to go down and figure out the elevator to take
25 up. They're going to come to our lot. And at night, I

1 already told Kevin once we're closed, for his restaurant,
2 he can use our lot. We're trying to work together, just
3 like Joe and I are trying to work together. But all of a
4 sudden these people are going to drive up and say --
5 we're going to have to adapt to this. We have to figure
6 this out.

7 MAYOR STRAUSS: So you don't want any of the
8 other retail businesses that are going to go into the
9 Village Green project to be successful?

10 MR. FOX: They're going to be successful.

11 MAYOR STRAUSS: I hope they are.

12 MR. FOX: No. They're -- Mayor, please, that's
13 not what I said.

14 MAYOR STRAUSS: It sounds like it. It sounds
15 like you have --

16 MR. FOX: I said that they're going to need
17 parking above ground is what I'm trying to point out.

18 MAYOR STRAUSS: OK. But you have a parking lot
19 of 30 spaces, roughly, that says: Fox's Only. They're
20 not going to park in there.

21 MR. FOX: Our parking lot does not support our
22 business.

23 MAYOR STRAUSS: OK. So what's your answer to
24 the parking congestion that your business is thankfully
25 causing?

1 MR. FOX: Pardon me?

2 MAYOR STRAUSS: What's your answer to the
3 parking problem that your business is thankfully causing?

4 Your business is so successful that you don't
5 have enough parking spots for your customers as it is.
6 So what's your answer to solve your problem of lack of
7 parking?

8 MR. FOX: The answer is that we keep the meter
9 parking turning over.

10 MAYOR STRAUSS: Which we did.

11 MR. FOX: And we don't add at this point in
12 time to more congestion in the Village.

13 Mayor, I can't be -- I can't help the fact that
14 we've been here for 35 years and we're established. And
15 we're here and if we're causing a parking problem. We
16 bring consumers into the area that will hopefully work
17 with Kevin's retail and have synergy with that. I'm all
18 for it.

19 When we added other retailers on the street, we
20 were very happy with that. We had a handbag store. We
21 had a shoe business. We had a lot of retail. We were
22 all very happy there. It's OK.

23 MR. WALSH: Mayor, if I can just add something
24 about the parking, and there is something else that is
25 being left out here as far as your parking is concerned.

1 You previously owned a building that was a -- I
2 thought it was owned by the Long Island Railroad because
3 it was an old building with plywood on the windows. It
4 was the worst-looking building down there. That was your
5 building. You sold that building to Kevin Lalezarian --
6 who you keep calling Kevin -- Kevin Lalezarian, which
7 people may not know is the 199 -- the Village project.

8 So you could have taken that building down and
9 created more parking for yourself. Instead you chose to
10 sell that property to --

11 MR. FOX: No. We didn't sell it.

12 MR. WALSH: -- Lalezarian.

13 MR. FOX: No. That's incorrect. No. We
14 didn't. We took it down and used it for parking. We
15 didn't sell it.

16 MR. WALSH: That was your building.

17 MR. FOX: That was our building.

18 MR. WALSH: You could have made parking out of
19 that.

20 MR. FOX: We did.

21 MAYOR STRAUSS: Yes, but that was taken down by
22 Lalezarian?

23 MR. FOX: No. No. No.

24 MAYOR STRAUSS: Please educate me.

25 MR. FOX: OK.

1 MAYOR STRAUSS: What happened?

2 MR. FOX: It was an eyesore.

3 MAYOR STRAUSS: Yes. What happened?

4 MR. FOX: Everybody will agree to that.

5 Kevin didn't want it as an eyesore. He paid
6 for the demolition. He took it down, but we are
7 currently using that. That is a parking lot. It's still
8 -- he did take it down for us. And it would have been --
9 it wasn't so much the cost, but we had to entertain ideas
10 because at that time there was no development. We had to
11 entertain -- people wanted to lease that building. So we
12 weren't sure if we should take it down or just leave it.
13 But when Kevin came along he said: Bob, that's an
14 eyesore. I said: I agree with you, Kevin. He says:
15 I'll pay -- when I have my demo guys here, I'll pay to
16 take it down. There's nothing else. It was never sold.
17 We weren't trying to have any gain on that. We
18 wouldn't -- we know how desperate the parking is.

19 MR. WALSH: Thank you.

20 MAYOR STRAUSS: Anything else?

21 MR. FOX: No.

22 MAYOR STRAUSS: Anybody else in the second row?
23 Third row? Fourth row?

24 MR. REDMOND: Tom Redmond, 187 Grant Avenue,
25 Mineola, New York.

1 Just two really quick things. The last meeting
2 they had stated they're going to provide, like, for the
3 planters going in with the third rail track project. I
4 just want, like, more clarification on that because
5 that's already the amenity that the third track project
6 is providing to the Village. So it's -- immediately when
7 I heard that, like, they have offered to provide
8 something that the railroad is already going to provide
9 us. Maybe they're saying they're going maintain it,
10 like, assuming the railroad won't maintain it, which they
11 probably won't.

12 MR. WALSH: Excuse me. Could you talk a little
13 slower because I'm -- I'm sorry, but I'm having a hard
14 time following you.

15 MR. REDMOND: Yes.

16 So what I'm talking about is the third track
17 project is putting in a roundabout and a couple of
18 planter spots, and they offered to -- I just wanted
19 clarification on what they were offering because it
20 sounds like they're going to buy plants and stuff for
21 that, but the railroad is already providing that with the
22 third track project. So I just wanted a little
23 clarification on that because that was an amenity they
24 offered. That's the only thing.

25 And then, I do like the improvements, the

1 changes on the building. Only one thing I was thinking
2 of maybe was the -- what they put looks like a cornice,
3 the darker brick, like the grey-ish brick they have,
4 maybe if it was up there where the darker brick. Just a
5 possible suggestion a couple of people in the room were
6 talking about, if that were that color maybe it would
7 stand out more. But pretty much that's it.

8 MAYOR STRAUSS: Thank you.

9 Anybody else in the fourth row?

10 MR. BURNSIDE: Peter Burnside, 303 Wellington
11 Road. I'm also with the Historical Society. I'm a
12 retired construction superintendent. I was with Torrent
13 Construction for many years.

14 I would just like to remind everybody: Once
15 this building goes up, you start building, you're going
16 to have a construction fence probably out at the curb.
17 Nobody is going to want to park right next to the fence.
18 And you're going to have a big construction gate, so any
19 parking in front of this building is going to be --
20 there's going to be no parking in front of that during
21 that whole time.

22 Do we know how long that construction phase is
23 going to take?

24 MAYOR STRAUSS: We'll find out.

25 Anybody else in the fourth row? Fifth row?

1 Sixth row? Seventh?

2 Yes, sir.

3 MR. SUTHERLAND: Russ Sutherland, 3 Birchwood
4 Court.

5 I've attended these hearings over the years,
6 last 15 years, downtown projects and so forth. I found
7 this Board very, very carefully watching the progress of
8 the downtown area through the years and they are very,
9 very careful in their planning and very mindful of
10 everybody's interests in the Village. And I've heard the
11 horror stories and the concerns of the merchants,
12 residents, in the area, and they are again very mindful
13 of everybody's concerns on this entire downtown project.

14 I live about four blocks away from where this
15 building is going to be built. And as the many hats I
16 where in the Village, I'm also a member of the Historical
17 Society, and I have to agree with everything Dennis Walsh
18 stated. Those were my concerns too. And they came back
19 and they took care of all those concerns, and they have
20 changed. And I like the way the aesthetics of the
21 building conforms to that area that has many old
22 buildings dating back more than 100 years old, and it
23 fits right in.

24 And I'm quite sure that knowing -- and
25 Birchwood residents too -- and, yes, we have a number of

1 our co-op owners of our 444 units -- we have a number of
2 our shareholders that do not own automobiles because of
3 the mass transit in the area and, not only that, the
4 businesses in the area.

5 And yes, Fox's has been a very, I think, a very
6 good business that has really helped Mineola and will
7 continue to do so. I'm quite sure that they will
8 continue to thrive. I hope so.

9 Thank you.

10 MAYOR STRAUSS: Thank you, Mr. Sutherland.

11 Yes, sir?

12 MR. MAHER: Richard Maher, 143 Walker Road,
13 Mineola.

14 You guys bring all good points. Thank you very
15 much. You drove down on some of the important issues,
16 and the developer has listened and they made these
17 changes. I financed a lot of construction projects. I
18 worked with a lot of developers for a living. And they
19 were quite responsive and I have to commend them. And
20 even shearing off an apartment unit, in a smaller project
21 like this, you know, it impacts their bottom line. It's
22 a big task that they're taking on and so forth, but
23 they're still sticking with the project, and I commend
24 them.

25 Also, in speaking to the developer on the side

1 and the team on the side, they're going to develop this
2 through the back. The crane is going to come in through
3 the back where the intended MTA parking will be. So
4 there's not going to be heavy traffic of construction --
5 I mean, there's going to be some, but you're not going to
6 be talking about a crane coming down Main Street. It's
7 going to go through the back.

8 So to have the feasibility for this project,
9 and for the overall downtown, doing it now would be the
10 right time, while that parking lot or that back lot is
11 still accessible. They put up that parking lot, it's not
12 going to work. You're going to have a crane on Main
13 Street. That would impact things severely downtown.

14 You know, unfortunately, Mr. Fox, you run a
15 great business. You said women don't shop three times a
16 day. If my wife could be in your store three times a
17 day, she would. So it's a great business. You have a
18 beautiful building on the east side. You've done very
19 well. The white building I know well. So, you know, I
20 mean, it's a destination. Parking is something that
21 we're all dealing with throughout the island.

22 I serve on many real estate boards and many
23 things and topics. One of the real estate boards I'm on
24 is the Real Estate Institute, and every couple of months
25 we have these symposiums and guest speakers, and it's the

1 same story over and over and over again. Transit
2 oriented development. Keeping the millennials. Keeping
3 the young people.

4 This project works well. One bedrooms.
5 They're not going to be hitting up the school district.
6 Hopefully they'll stay in our community and buy here.

7 Also, the millennials, the younger people, they
8 Uber, OK. Unless daddy is paying for the car, they're
9 not buying it. And with the Long Island Railroad right
10 there. They will Uber. So I don't think we'll have a --
11 I mean, I'm not going to say everybody in that building
12 is going to get around by Uber, but I think the majority
13 will be. You know, living on the island is very
14 expensive. They don't need the car. They won't do it.

15 I think the time is to act now. This developer
16 is coming in now and talking. The interest rates are
17 rising. They're going to climb a little bit more. This
18 is the opportunity.

19 If this -- we don't even know when this -- if
20 we were to hold this project until they put that parking
21 lot --

22 That MTA parking lot in the back, when is that
23 going to happen? Does anybody know?

24 MAYOR STRAUSS: Probably another year or so,
25 maybe year-and-a-half, two.

1 MR. MAHER: Right.

2 MR. GIBBONS: That's optimistic.

3 MR. MAHER: Right.

4 But, you know, we have someone who is willing
5 to come in, invest, to clean up the downtown -- I'm not
6 saying clean up -- modernize our downtown in conjunction
7 with what our Master Plan was. It's a beautiful-looking
8 building. It will help clean up downtown. If we can
9 only get the north side of 2nd and Main, and help clean
10 up what's on the west side of the street and around by
11 the barber shop. I mean, that back building is turn of
12 the century, 1880.s, you know, the property with the --
13 it looks like something -- I think the movie set was
14 there doing a restage of the old west, of Gun Smoke. I
15 mean, it's old, OK.

16 So I ask the Village Board to go ahead with
17 this project in a timely fashion.

18 And, you know, Mr. Fox, I understand your
19 concerns. We're all dealing with it. The third track
20 was forced upon us. That dead end, listen, there's
21 nothing we can do about it. But, you know, you did have
22 also that other ugly building up there for years in the
23 back which you could have taken down. You could have
24 used for parking. You didn't. You chose not to. The
25 developer came along and he did you a favor. You could

1 have had more parking in there, more customers in there.
2 And hopefully that building across the street will have
3 more customers for you, as will the Village Green.

4 Thank you very much.

5 MAYOR STRAUSS: All right. Thank you, Mr.
6 Maher.

7 Anybody else in the seventh row?

8 OK. Mr. Silva?

9 So the questions that were asked were regarding
10 the planters and the --

11 MR. SILVA: Yes.

12 So with Mr. Fox, I think we addressed
13 everything at the last one and I don't want to waste
14 everybody's time going over the same thing.

15 The planters. Yeah. What we talked about --
16 we didn't say anything about planters. What we offered
17 to do is, once the railroad closes off the street, we
18 offered -- and I don't know what it's going to look like
19 -- was specifically landscaping. So I'm imagining a
20 little area there that will have some sort of greenery.
21 Whatever form that takes, it will be up to the Board to
22 let us know what they prefer to see there. But it was
23 never intended to be planters. And we're not aware,
24 also, that the railroad was going to do that as well.

25 We're also offering to do curb cut elimination

1 in front of our area, and also put pavers there to
2 continue that on instead of just the concrete.

3 And is there something else? I think that was
4 all --

5 MAYOR STRAUSS: How long is construction going
6 to take?

7 MR. SILVA: Oh. Construction. That was the
8 next thing.

9 Even if we were to get approved today, by the
10 time you have everything in place, you're going to take
11 12 to 18 months before you can actually get started.

12 And regarding the construction fence, the .
13 construction fence wouldn't be up during the entire
14 construction process either. It will only be up during
15 demolition and during the initial putting up of the
16 outside walls. Once that's up, there's no need for a
17 fence anymore. And I don't know how long that particular
18 phase will take, but the entire project is probably about
19 12 to 14 months, start to finish.

20 So six months? I don't know how long the fence
21 would be up.

22 Besides that, are there any other questions --

23 THE COURT: No.

24 Anything else from the Board?

25 MR. PEREIRA: Mayor, just a couple of comments

1 to address some of the issues, and I don't want this to
2 get -- I think, Mr. Fox, that I hope that what you get
3 out of this Board and out of some of the residents is we
4 love Fox's of Mineola. We want you to stay here. And
5 I'm telling you, we could make -- you're shaking your
6 head -- but we'll make a nice little wager, for lunch
7 maybe, that 35 years from now you'll still be here. The
8 sky is not falling, OK? You're going to continue to be
9 the cornerstone of that downtown Mineola area.

10 I just happened to be in Huntington about a
11 couple of weeks ago at the Paramount, and I looked across
12 the street and there's a Fox's. I assume that that's
13 also yours, right, or related to you guys? And I just
14 looked on Google Maps while we're sitting here. I don't
15 see any parking for that, no dedicated parking that is
16 yours. On-street parking, right? It seems like it's
17 been -- I don't know how long it's been there, but it
18 seems like a very well-established business.

19 I'm sure that when the Paramount was being
20 worked on, when it was being built -- and the venue
21 holds, I don't know, 1,000 people, or something like
22 that -- that there were probably some growing pains, but
23 it looks like and I would probably venture to say that
24 the Paramount -- which, by the way, I'm not making any
25 comparison a ten-unit three-story, four-story building.

1 The Paramount I'm sure, if anything, it's brought people
2 into the community. It's been more of a magnet for your
3 business. And I'm not here to discuss how you should run
4 your business and whether you're successful or not. I
5 believe, given 35 years of success, that you will
6 continue to be successful if you choose to remain in
7 Mineola.

8 The issue with Main Street being closed, you
9 know, the Board had a number of -- or the MTA presented a
10 number of scenarios. One of them was an underpass under
11 Main Street, which would essentially isolate Fox's. It
12 would -- your store would be looking at a hole. We
13 didn't think that that was good at the time. Another one
14 was some sort of bridge over Main Street. Again, you
15 would be under a bridge. That isn't something I think
16 you would appreciate. And of the options that were given
17 for Main Street, this was the best one, not just for you
18 but for all the businesses.

19 And you mentioned about how this is going to
20 cut you off from everything on the southern side. Now
21 we've seen some renderings. I'm sure these renderings
22 are accessible to everyone. There are pedestrian bridges
23 that are going to be put that are going to connect the
24 southern parking to the northern part of Main Street.

25 Having said that, you said a couple of things

1 that -- I like your suggestion about the two hour parking
2 and limiting it to two hours. And you're right. I think
3 business owners, employees, who park in front of their
4 own businesses and just feed the meter all day, they're
5 choking off their business. Absolutely, you know, that's
6 Business 101. And hopefully they'll understand that. I
7 think that was a good suggestion.

8 But something that you said. You said: Main
9 Street can work. It has worked for us for 35 years.

10 That is great. We want Main Street to work for
11 everyone, for Fox's and for everyone else. So that's
12 what the Master Plan is about. The Master Plan is about
13 Main Street and downtown working for everyone because,
14 although we are proud of Fox's and the fact that -- and I
15 like the way that you reference Fox's of Mineola. It's a
16 destination, as Mr. Maher said. And this is not to put
17 down anyone else in that Main Street area but, outside of
18 Fox's, I'd be hard-pressed to find any part of Main
19 Street that we can say we're proud of right now. And I
20 hope that in three, four, five years we can be proud of
21 the entire neighborhood because it's all going to look
22 like that. It's all going to look like your building.
23 That's what we want.

24 And I understand that you want to slow it, or
25 stagger it, or stop it, or prevent it, whatever the word

1 is, but you can't possibly be proud of what's there now.
2 We can't possibly, as a community, accept the status quo
3 of what's there now that hasn't worked for anybody, other
4 than Fox's, downtown. We can't accept that. We can't
5 accept that it's OK to keep the status quo.

6 When I look at those businesses, other than
7 yourself and TeAmo, I can't think of a single business
8 that's been there for, you know, any extended period of
9 time. They've all shuttered. They've all gone out of
10 business. And that's not what we want. We want
11 vitality. We want to inject vitality.

12 And again, your concern is Fox's. Understood.
13 Our concern is the Village of Mineola and the 22,000
14 residents and the hundreds of businesses that make up the
15 Village of Mineola. So we have to weigh that. And we're
16 not discounting Fox's, because it's an important part of
17 that puzzle. It's a part of the puzzle that we hope
18 continues to be here. And I think it's going to be a
19 part of the puzzle that is going to make the downtown
20 what we envisioned it ten, 15 years ago.

21 So, I like the development. I like the
22 project.

23 I also want to point out, for anyone who didn't
24 watch the last meeting, this is not an IDA project. This
25 is not seeking PILOTs. This is not getting any tax

1 breaks. This is going to increase our tax base. This is
2 going to bring more money to the Village and to the
3 schools with minimal, I would probably venture zero,
4 impact to the school district.

5 So having said that, are there negatives? Of
6 course there are negatives with any change, with
7 anything. Anyone who has ever undergone any renovations
8 in their house knows it's uncomfortable to live without a
9 kitchen, or live without a bathroom, or live with dust,
10 or live with noise, or live with, you know, a tarp for a
11 roof, but the finished product I hope is worth it. I
12 believe it is worth it.

13 Thank you, Mayor.

14 MAYOR STRAUSS: Mr. Silva, anything else?

15 MR. SILVA: That's all. Thank you.

16 MR. DURHAM: Mayor?

17 MAYOR STRAUSS: Yes, sir.

18 MR. DURHAM: I just want to say that, if we do
19 not approve this and we delay it, there's probably going
20 to be a different Board sitting up here at the time that
21 he's going to have to come back and try and put this
22 building here. And that we have a Board right now that
23 is pro downtown, pro building, pro taking and making the
24 downtown a walkable area. We don't know what's going to
25 happen four, five years, ten years from now. If he takes

1 and pushes off this building, we don't know whether it
2 will ever be approved by another Board.

3 The people that are up here right now, I
4 believe, are looking to take and do right by the
5 downtown, right by the businesses. I've known you for a
6 long time. We've worked together in 2000, 2003, on the
7 Master Plan. I'm certainly not trying to hurt your
8 business. I'm trying to take and benefit and improve the
9 Village with my decisions about what goes there, because
10 I think that if we take and push to do this while the
11 parking lot is still there open behind you, before the
12 construction on the other lot starts, is the time to take
13 and do this, to take and try and get this work done
14 quicker so that it's completed and it's a walkable nice
15 area for everybody.

16 Thank you.

17 MAYOR STRAUSS: Any other comments from the
18 Board?

19 Mr. Silva, anything else?

20 MR. SILVA: That's all. Thank you very much,
21 and thank everyone here.

22 MAYOR STRAUSS: Thank you.

23 I'll entertain a motion to close and reserve
24 decision.

25 MR. WALSH: Motion.

1 MAYOR STRAUSS: Motion by Trustee Walsh.

2 Second?

3 MR. PEREIRA: Second.

4 MAYOR STRAUSS: Trustee Pereira.

5 All in favor?

6 MR. DURHAM: Aye.

7 MR. PEREIRA: Aye.

8 MR. CUSATO: Aye.

9 MR. WALSH: Aye.

10 MAYOR STRAUSS: Aye.

11 Any opposed?

12 Carried.

13 Folks, thank you very much for coming out this
14 evening.

15 * * *
16 This is to certify that the within and foregoing is a
17 true and accurate transcript of the stenographic notes as
18 recorded by the undersigned Official Court Reporter.

19 * * *

20 
21 PATRICIA A. TAUBER, RPR
22 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER
23
24
25